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Remarks

Claims 12-13, 15, and 18-22 and 24-25 are pending. Claims 1-11, 14, 16-17, and 23 have been cancelled. Claims 12, 20, and 22 are independent claims. Reconsideration and reexamination of the application is respectfully requested.

The independent claim 12 has been amended to include all of the limitations of the original dependent claim 17 and of the original intervening claims 14 and 16, so as to patentably define applicant's originally disclosed invention over the prior art of record.

In particular, the primary reference DE '698 discloses actuation means that comprise:

- a ring (22) that is rotatably mounted on a hub (21), which surrounds the stationary coupling disk (3), and that is provided with two opposite rectilinear and parallel sliding guides (221);
- a guiding element (51) which embraces and is coupled to the mixing disk (5), the guiding element (51) being provided with two lateral arms (551) that slidably engage respectively with the guides (221);
- a lever (6) having an end that is provided with a handle (63) and the opposite end that is pivoted about a pivot (61) to the ring (22), the pivot (61) having an axis parallel to the coupling plane between the stationary coupling disk (3) and the mixing disk (5);
- the lever (6) is, moreover, provided with a pin (62) which lies in an elongated bore that is defined in the guiding element (51).

The actuation means disclosed in DE '698 leave the mixing port (50) and the discharge port (40) free, however they have a bulky and complicated structure comprising a kinematic chain of a plurality of interacting elements (i.e. the lever (6), the rotatable ring (22), the guiding element (51), the pivot (61) and the pin (62)).

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To the contrary of the structure disclosed in DE '698, applicant's claimed mixing cartridge of the independent claim 1 submitted herewith comprises actuation means that are provided with a lever (20) that rotatably engages in a seat (24) formed on the face of said mixing disk (17) that lies opposite said base disk (4). The engagement of the lever (20) directly with the mixing disk (17) does not require the presence of any other intermediate element such as a rotating ring surrounding the mixing disk or a guiding element coupled to the rotating ring, therefore the kinematic chain of the actuation means of the present invention is advantageously more simple and comprises a reduced number of interacting elements.

Moreover, it has to be noted that the lever (20) of the claimed invention and its shaft (22) are arranged so as to cross the discharge conduit (19), the actuation means of the present invention have thus reduced overall dimensions and ensure, at the same time, a correct flow of the mixed water through the same discharge conduit (19).

Accordingly it is submitted that the subject matter defined in the independent claim 12 amended herewith is patentable over the prior art of record.

The new claim 24 defines "said lever and said shaft are arranged so as to cross inside the discharge conduit", as disclosed originally, see e.g. each of the originally filed drawings Figs. 1-4 clearly showing the lever (20) and the shaft (22) arranged so as to cross inside the discharge conduit (19).

The new claim 25 defines "said mixing disk is formed in two parts, respectively a peripheral part and a central part, said central part being crossed by said mixing port and being provided with said seat", as disclosed originally e.g. page 5, lines 7-9 and Figs. 1-4, according to which the mixing disk (17) is formed in two parts (17a, 17b). The feature that "said central part being crossed by said mixing port and being provided with said seat" finds support in the Figures 1-4 as originally filed, from which it is

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clearly and unequivocally derivable that the seat (24) is defined in the central part (17b) of the mixing disk (17).

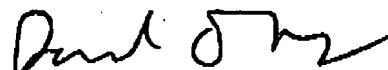
In view of the above, it is submitted that the independent claim 12 and the claims 13, 15, 18-19, 21, and 24-25 dependent therefrom are in an allowable state.

The claim 20 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the previous claim 12. In view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, applicant believes that claim 20 as amended herewith is in an allowable state.

Applicant submits that the independent claim 22 is also in an allowable state since it defines the single-lever mixing faucet that includes the patentable mixing cartridge of the allowable claim 12.

In view of the foregoing, applicant respectfully solicits allowance of pending claims 12-13, 15, and 18-22 and 24-25.

Respectfully submitted,



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